CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for managing network configuration data, the network comprising a plurality of first type computers having a limited function range excluding at least a self-boot process and being bootable by a second type computer having a respective extended function range, said method comprising:

sending location information about the first type computer such that a respective second type computer may receive it.

2. The method according to claim 1 in which said location information is included into boot messages usable between first type and second type computers according to a predetermined network communication protocol.

3. The method according claim 2 further comprising:

including current status information about the first type computer into Infoboot messages having the same format as said boot messages; and

periodically sending current status information in said boot messages after a successful boot of the first type computer.

4. The method according to claim 2 further comprising providing a flagging means in said boot message for distinguishing between said boot message and said Infoboot message.

5. The method according to claim 1 wherein said location information is included into boot messages according to the BootP protocol.

6. A method for managing network configuration data, the network comprising a plurality of first type computers having a limited function range excluding at least a self-boot process and being bootable by a second type computer having a respective extended function range, said method comprising:

collecting first-type-computer-related location and /or status information from a plurality of locations in the network by evaluating messages sent out by the first type computers; and

storing said location and /or status information.

7. The method according to claim 6 wherein said second type computer is a server, and further comprising using the location information for determining the server's own network location.

8. The method according to claim 7 further comprising collecting said information in a dedicated database.

9. The method according to claim 8 further comprising setting up a network configuration description according to the stored information.

10. The method according claim 9 further comprising, after a second-type-computer-related operation disruption, evaluating current status and /or location information associated with said first type computers before other messages.

11. The method according to claim 6 further comprising consistently operating second type server computers serving first type embedded controller computers in an enterprise network.

12. The method according to claim 6 further comprising operating second type server computers serving first type embedded controller computers in a computer-controlled industry plant.

13. An apparatus method for managing network configuration data, said apparatus comprising:

a plurality of first type computers having a limited function range excluding at least a self-boot process;

a second type computer having a respective extended function range, said first type computers being bootable by said second type computer; and

a transmitter sending location information about the first type computer such that a respective second type computer may receive it.

14. The apparatus according to claim 13 in which said location information is included into boot messages usable between first type and second type computers according to a predetermined network communication protocol.

15. The apparatus according claim 14 further comprising:

a facility including current status information about the first type computer into Infoboot messages having the same format as said boot messages; and

a facility periodically sending current status information in said boot messages after a successful boot of the first type computer.

16. The apparatus according to claim 14 further comprising a flag in said boot message for distinguishing between said boot message and said Infoboot message.

17. The apparatus according to claim 13 wherein said location information is included into boot messages according to the BootP protocol.

18. An apparatus for managing network configuration data, the network comprising a plurality of first type computers having a limited function range excluding at least a self-boot process and being bootable by a second type computer having a respective extended function range, said apparatus comprising:

An evaluator collecting first-type-computer-related location and /or status information from a plurality of locations in the network by evaluating messages sent out by the first type computers; and

a memory storing said location and /or status information.

19. The apparatus according to claim 18 wherein said second type computer is a server, and further comprising using the location information for determining the server's own network location.

20. The apparatus according to claim 19 further comprising said evaluator collecting said information in a dedicated database.

21. The apparatus according to claim 20 further comprising setting up a network configuration description according to the stored information.

22. The apparatus according claim 21 further comprising, after a second-type-computer-related operation disruption, evaluating current status and /or location information associated with said first type computers before other messages.

23. The apparatus according to claim 18 further comprising consistently operating second type server computers serving first type embedded controller computers in an enterprise network.

24. The apparatus according to claim 18 further comprising operating second type server computers serving first type

embedded controller computers in a computer-controlled industry plant.

25. A program product for managing network configuration data, the network comprising a plurality of first type computers having a limited function range excluding at least a self-boot process and being bootable by a second type computer having a respective extended function range, said program product comprising:

a computer readable medium having recorded thereon computer readable program code means for performing the method comprising:

sending location information about the first type computer such that a respective second type computer may receive it.

26. The program product according to claim 25 in which said location information is included into boot messages usable between first type and second type computers according to a predetermined network communication protocol.

27. The program product according claim 25 wherein said method further comprises:

including current status information about the first type computer into Infoboot messages having the same format as said boot messages; and

periodically sending current status information in said boot messages after a successful boot of the first type computer.

28. The program product according to claim 26 wherein said method further comprises providing a flagging means in said boot message for distinguishing between said boot message and said Infoboot message.

29. The program product according to claim 25 wherein said location information is included into boot messages according to the BootP protocol.

30. A program product for managing network configuration data, the network comprising a plurality of first type computers having a limited function range excluding at least a self-boot process and being bootable by a second type computer having a respective extended function range, said program product comprising:

a computer readable medium having recorded thereon computer readable program code means for performing the method comprising:

collecting first-type-computer-related location and /or status information from a plurality of locations in the network by evaluating messages sent out by the first type computers; and

storing said location and /or status information.

31. The program product according to claim 30 wherein said second type computer is a server, and said method further comprises using the location information for determining the server's own network location.

32. The program product according to claim 31 wherein said method further comprises collecting said information in a dedicated database.

33. The program product according to claim 32 wherein said method further comprises setting up a network configuration description according to the stored information.

34. The program product according claim 33 wherein said method further comprises, after a second-type-computer-related operation disruption, evaluating current status and /or location

information associated with said first type computers before other messages.

35. The program product according to claim 25 wherein said method further comprises consistently operating second type server computers serving first type embedded controller computers in an enterprise network.

36. The program product according to claim 25 wherein said method further comprises operating second type server computers serving first type embedded controller computers in a computer-controlled industry plant.